

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 059597

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 H-02 CU-02 CIAE-00 FBIE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DOHA

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059597

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, QA

SUBJECT: A-2 VISAS FOR ARABIAN PENINSULA STUDENTS

REF: DOHA 250

1. I APPRECIATE THE PRESSURE YOU ARE UNDER FROM YOUR QATARI FRIENDS, WHO THINK THERE IS SOME DISCRIMINATION IN THE FACT THAT THEY ARE DENIED A-2'S ALTHOUGH SAUDI AND KUWAITI COUNTERPARTS CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THEM.

2. THIS IS AN EXASPERATING PROBLEM, AND I CANNOT YET TELL  
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PAGE 02 STATE 059597

YOU HOW IT WILL COME OUT, ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WE

WILL HAVE TO DISCONTINUE A-2'S FOR STUDENTS WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE. FOR THE TIME BEING, SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS ARE BENEFITTING FROM AN ARRANGEMENT SEEMINGLY GOING BACK INTO ANCIENT HISTORY. THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD THAT SIMILAR PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT COULD BE ACCORDED TO ADDITIONAL BENEFICIARIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. DEPARTMENT IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE HILL TO DO AWAY PROMPTLY WITH THE A-2 FOR STUDENTS. QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER THIS EXTRA-LEGAL ARRANGEMENT CAN BE EXTENDED OR EVEN PRESERVED, BUT RATHER HOW SOON IT WILL HAVE TO BE GIVEN UP.

3. BECAUSE OF VARIOUS CURRENT ISSUES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA, WE WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN A-2 ARRANGEMENT AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THIS SUMMER SEASONAL VISA RUSH FOR STUDENTS. WE HOPE TO JUSTIFY THIS TO KEY PERSONS ON THE HILL WHO HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THAT THEY WANT THE ARRANGEMENT DISCONTINUED BEFORE THE SUMMER SEASON. ALTHOUGH THE OUTCOME IS UNCLEAR AT THIS TIME, DEPARTMENT'S INITIAL EFFORTS TO OBTAIN DELAY HAVE BEEN REBUFFED.

4. MEANWHILE, WE ARE CONSIDERING HOW TO BREAK THE NEWS TO THE SAUDIS (AND KUWAITIS), AND WHAT TYPE OF ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS (ALSO OPEN TO OTHER COUNTRIES) TO SUGGEST THEY CONSIDER. WE WILL SHARE OUR THINKING WITH YOU AS TIME PROGRESSES.

5. I HOPE THAT, WITH THE ABOVE BACKGROUND, YOU CAN CONTINUE SUCCESSFULLY TO FEND OFF THE PRESSURE TO WHICH YOU ARE BEING SUBJECTED. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST QATARI STUDENTS IS THE FARTHEST FROM OUR MINDS, AND IT SHOULD IN NO WAY BE SEEN TO EXIST IN OUR INABILITY TO EXTEND TO QATAR A SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH IS A RELIC OF THE PAST AND WHICH WILL ALMOST SURELY HAVE TO BE FOREGONE.  
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